CALIFORNIA MARINE LIFE PROTECTION ACT INITIATIVE
MASTER PLAN SCIENCE ADVISORY TEAM
Meeting Summary
January 7, 2005
Elihu Harris State Building
1515 Clay Street, Room 11
Oakland, California

Science Team members present: Loo Botsford, Mark Carr, Steve Gaines, Doyle Hanan, Rikk Kvitek, Steve Murray, Mark Ohman, Jeff Paduan, Linwood Pendleton, Steve Ralston, Laura Rogers-Bennett, Dave Schaub, Astrid Scholz, Rick Starr, William Sydeman, Dean Wendt, Mary Yoklavich.

Not present: Kenneth Schiff

Others present: Science Team Chair Steve Barrager and approximately 15 members of the public.

DFG staff: Dave Parker, Paul Reilly, John Ugoretz, Patty Wolf

MLPA Initiative Staff: John Kirlin, Mike Weber

Introduction and Welcome

Patty Wolf, DFG Marine Region manager, made introductory remarks. The MLPA Initiative has the support of DFG's director, the Resources Agency's secretary, and the Governor. The initiative has an ambitious timetable and its credibility rests heavily on readily available science. Patty briefly explained the charge to the Science Team (Team).

Patty announced three recent appointments: Dr. Steve Barrager is the Science Team Chair and not an official member of the Team. Dr. Steve Ralston, National Marine Fisheries Service, has been added to the Team. Dr. Laura Rogers-Bennett, DFG Senior Biologist Specialist, has been added to the Team as the department's MLPA Technical Advisor.

John Kirlin, MLPA Initiative executive director, explained his role of keeping the process on track and acting as the primary link to the Blue Ribbon Task Force (BRTF). He then asked the Team members to briefly introduce themselves and state their area of expertise.

Charge to the Science Team – Operating Procedures

John Ugoretz, DFG's MLPA and nearshore ecosystem coordinator, stated that Laura Rogers-Bennett will be DFG's primary representative at future Team meetings. John read the charge to the Team from their charter (available on the MLPA web site). Team meetings will be more frequent than bi-monthly in the beginning, will be open to the

public, and will be video-taped. Each meeting will have at least one formal public comment period.

The Team will not write the draft master plan framework, but will review and comment on the document. The Team is empowered by DFG's director until 2006. A science subteam will work with the central coast project's regional stakeholder group. A member of the subteam will attend all regional group meetings.

Mike Weber, MLPA Initiative senior project manager, explained the proposed time table for the draft Master Plan Framework: first draft completed by mid-February, then comments from the public, BRTF, and Science Team; next draft completed by late March and presented to the BRTF at its April meeting.

Mike stated the Team still needs another fishery economist; several candidates have been suggested. The Team also is required to have a representative of the State Water Resources Control Board - this position is currently vacant.

In response to questions from the Team, staff explained that the draft annotated table of contents for the Master Plan Framework came primarily from the language of the MLPA and also from the first two rounds of the MLPA process from 2000 until 2003. Staff explained that the BRTF received a document summarizing other related state and federal MPA processes in California, which we will make available to the Team.

The Team asked and discussed how do we define and measure success in relation to the MLPA Initiative and process.

Criteria for Selecting the Central Coast Project Area

A two-page draft document (available on the MLPA web site) was posted on screen and reviewed by Mike Weber. John Ugoretz explained that what is considered to be the greater central coast area (Pt. Arena to Pt. Conception) will not be considered as the central coast project area as it is too large. The Team commented that all of the criteria listed pertain to human use. What is lacking is a habitat-based criterion which reflects natural boundaries. There are biogeographic breaks along the central coast. Along the entire state coast are fairly regularly-spaced capes or headlands which produce repetitive zones (upwelling and convergence); these should be considered when proposing project area boundaries. After caucusing during lunch, several Team members proposed that that the area from Pt. Conception to the Golden Gate or Pt. Reyes, with a partition at Pt. Sur, be considered as boundary options for the central coast project.

It was also suggested that the project area consider the diversity and intensity of human activities, such as recreational and commercial fishing, and non-consumptive scuba diving.

Not only are there *scales of repetition* that we need to consider but we must also include *scales of diversity* in network designs. Multiple areas with the same sandy bottom will not satisfy the criteria for a network.

Government activities should also be considered. For example, the greater central coast contains three national marine sanctuaries, two of which have ongoing stakeholder working groups dealing with MPAs and fishery issues.

The project area needs to be large enough to contain a network of MPAs, although staff clarifies that the project area will be developing recommendations for MPAs which ultimately will fit into a statewide network. The question was asked of how big does an area have to be to design a network. The Team offered that it depends on the species and could be from 2 to 1000 kilometers, but that several hundred kilometers was reasonable. The project area should be large enough to contain replicate MPAs with similar objectives to allow evaluation of the network aspect.

Staff remarked that the previous MLPA process had three stakeholder working groups within the greater central coast, and this approach considered practical aspects such as the geographical extent of individual knowledge about marine habitats and species. The Team commented that the last two draft criteria (distance working group members would need to travel and availability of DFG staff) were superfluous and not biological. Staff replied that practical aspects of convening meetings and staff availability must be considered. The Team commented that video-conferencing could mitigate for some of the potential difficulties due to excessive travel.

A public comment period followed. Summaries of comments germane to the central coast project criteria are as follows:

- Consider boundary lines established by federal fishery regulations.
- Support for the use of biophysical barriers as boundaries.
- Area must be large enough to provide for replication.
- Width of continental shelf varies with greater central coast; important to provide for a variety of shelf widths.
- Include area with high intensity of non-consumptive use (scuba) - Monterey Peninsula.
- Consider the existence of currents MPAs.
- A split at the Golden Gate will divide important fisheries and delay process due to need to revisit same fisheries twice.
- Consider presence of three existing national marine sanctuaries. The sanctuaries have a data base from Diablo Canyon to Gualala.

Further discussion on boundary options included occurrence of species. For example, the Monterey Bay has many borders for species' ranges but not for the dominant species. On either side of the Golden Gate Bridge are changes in abundance of dominant species. The

Team commented that Año Nuevo (the point used to define the boundary of two working groups in the previous MLPA process) has no definitive species breaks.

Staff then summarized suggestions by the Team on additional proposed central coast project criteria:

- Use major physical/geographic boundaries.
- Have area of sufficient size to include replicates.
- Have area of sufficient size to include high diversity and intensity of uses.
- Include at least part of an area that has maximum habitat information (Monterey Bay south to Pt. Conception).

The following items need to be accomplished relative to the central coast project area:

- Monitor MPAs which are adopted, as well as areas outside the MPAs, before, during, and after implementation.
- Social and economic studies are critical.
- An inventory of the available data for the central coast should be conducted and the data should be made available to all.
- Goals need to be defined.
- Funding options for research need to be explored.
- The list of species likely to benefit from MPAs needs to be re-visited.

Draft Master Plan Framework Table of Contents

The purpose of the framework is to provide guidance on the design and evaluation of MPA networks on a regional basis. These regional networks ultimately will comprise the statewide network. Staff will draft the language of the framework and will provide this to the Team, BRTF, and public for comments in an iterative process. Short-term contracts are underway, primarily in the form of literature surveys, to provide substance to the framework. Pieces of the draft framework will be circulated as they are ready, and additional workshops may be convened to obtain more information and comment. The goal is for the Fish and Game Commission to adopt the framework at their August 2005 meeting.

The framework will not include a legal interpretation of the MLPA. It will be a recommendation to the Fish and Game Commission, providing options where appropriate and guidance. It will be an adaptive document. There will be a range of minimum size criteria for individual MPAs and criteria explaining how to determined size for proposed MPAs. Staff then briefly reviewed the sections of the annotated table of contents (available on the MLPA web site). The evaluation of existing MPAs (Section IIIv) will occur on a regional basis only.

The Team was then asked the following questions for their long-term consideration:

- Which elements of the draft framework need urgent attention and least attention?
- How might available literature be applied?

- What kinds of information should be assembled?

Staff commented that some of the terms in the framework (e.g. definitions of three types of MPAs) have clearly defined state definitions. The biggest question is how to define the term "network."

The Team asked if they should be helping on contract work. Staff responded that the Team has the option of reviewing any drafts prepared by staff and contractors.

Team comments:

- Biggest gaps in framework relate to socio-economic studies.
- The socio-economic landscape needs to be determined before MPAs are proposed.
- The alternative network proposal outline made it appear that socioeconomic analysis would be conducted only after, not during, the development of MPA network proposals, and that such analysis should be part of the process of developing network proposals.
- Since MPA site replication by region is mandated by the MLPA, having more regions will result in more MPAs.
- The previous MLPA process used four regions; these were based primarily on habitat rather than species.

Draft Requirements for MPA Proposals

Staff briefly referred to the contents of this document (available on the MLPA web site) and stated that the are not looking for input today. There is another method for the public to propose MPAs outside this process, but DFG staff cannot contribute time and expertise and the Fish and Game Commission likely will not consider proposals for individual MPAs outside this process.

Staff further stated that the framework will not need a CEQA analysis but that the regional MPA network proposals will go through CEQA analysis during the regulatory process.

Short-Term Research Contracts and Long-Term Needs

Staff reviewed ongoing contract work, all of which involves literature surveys on the following topics:

- First element: Design, evaluation, and phasing of marine reserves, marine parks, marine conservation areas, and MPA networks.
- Second element: Key definitions, in literature, statutes, and regulations.
- Third element: Funding of MPA networks.
- Fourth element: Management of MPA networks.
- Fifth element: Implementation of MPA regulations.

Drafts of this short-term contract work should be available by the end of January.

Additional contract work planned:

- Update of DFG list of species likely to benefit from MPAs.
- Review of process for establishing list of species likely to benefit.
- Approaches to monitoring, research, and evaluation.
- Relative efficacy of MPAs and traditional fishery management tools.
- Impact of MPAs on existing regulatory programs.

(The latter two tasks were requested by the BRTF).

Staff added that possible workshops may be planned to discuss ocean mapping, socio-economics (a continuation of the 2002 workshop in Santa Cruz), and decision-making tools.

The Team requested a list of key research areas so they can make contractors aware of new studies in press. The Team commented that the contribution of MPAs to the sustainability of marine populations, and vice-verse, need to be considered. The Team stated that there are now federal working groups dealing with the integration of MPAs and fishery management and they are on a 2-3 year time frame. The Team stated that an important question to ask relative to the efficacy of MPAs is what causes variability in natural populations.

Team member Kvitek showed an example of high-resolution bathymetry and stated that he can direct future mapping efforts within the central coast project area. He has two more years of funding for mapping from the National Marine Sanctuary Program and additional funds from the CICOR program. He can obtain more habitat data locally once the central coast project area is determined. By June 2005 he will have high-resolution habitat maps from Monterey Bay to Pt. Sur out to 1.5 miles, plus the Farallon Islands and San Francisco areas. The deeper maps done by the U.S. Geological Survey in central California are on a coarse scale and can be considered as "habitat-potential" maps.

As an exercise, Chair Barrager then asked each Team member for a short response to the question, "How could this group fail?" The following summarizes the responses:

- Goal was consensus but we did not achieve it.
- Draft framework not produced by May 2005.
- Concerns of larger community were ignored.
- Overall goal was not kept in picture.
- It was not recognized that these are contentious processes.
- Goals of the MLPA were not met.
- Essential data were not collected.
- Measures for determining efficacy of MPAs were not developed.
- Only convenient habitats were protected.
- Advice was not provided that resulted in sustainability.
- What happened at the end did not depend on science.

- What MPAs are, or are not doing, were not quantitatively evaluated.
- We are politicized as having our own agenda.
- We cannot put aside individual differences of opinion.
- We do too much policy.
- We try to interpret legislation.
- We ask the wrong questions.
- The science we recommend is ignored because it is weak and confusing.
- We do not evaluate the guidelines later, relative to achieving goals.
- The process gets derailed due to politics after the group develops a good plan.
- We do not appreciate each others' perspectives.
- We are not articulate enough to make a difference.
- We have no plan to make the system accountable.
- We have an advocacy position for what is really policy.
- There was failure to act on the guidance of the Science Team.
- The Team ignores the history of the process.
- Expertise is not used effectively.
- Scientists are not clear as to what is desired from them.

A short public comment period ensued. One comment pleaded to the Team not to ignore local knowledge about species and habitats from local users.

The next two Science Team meetings were scheduled in Oakland at the Eliju Harris Building from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. on Friday February 11, 2005 and Wednesday March 23, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned.